

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

NEWARK HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Public Hearings

Public hearings should be used to get at community-wide problems.

To hold one, the Commissioners must be willing and able to spend a great deal of time preparing for the hearing. A meeting prior to the hearing, investigatory work, coupled with thorough efforts to persuade the minority community to attend and express their grievances is absolutely essential.

A public hearing can have some excellent results. A well prepared and publicized hearing can focus attention on the problems and grievances of the minority. In addition, the hearing can serve as a rallying point for the community, providing a base around which the people can organize their own efforts. The publicity itself can improve conditions by spotlighting problems and preventing those responsible from denying their existence or failing to act on them.

It is important to recognize, however, the potential disadvantages of the Public Hearing. The Commission that holds them and fails to act on the complaints therein, runs the risk of damaging not only its own standing in the community but also the community's confidence in solutions to its problems.

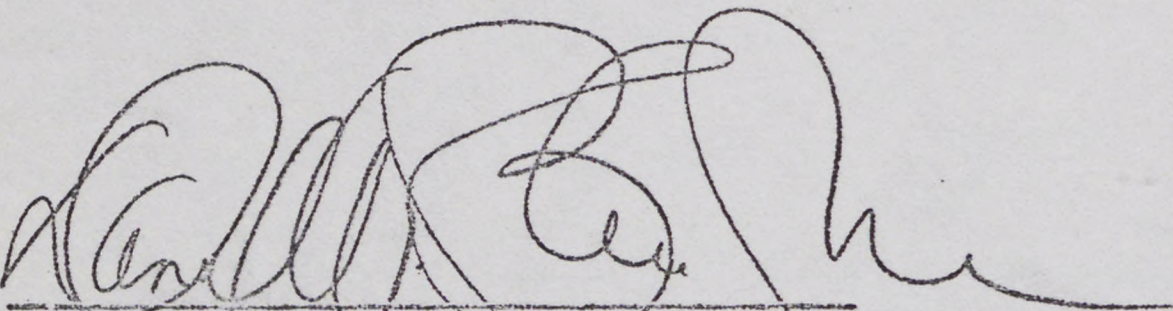
It is essential that follow up efforts be taken to show the community that the hearing was not a one-shot affair.

Human Rights Commissions must make better use of their natural allies--NAACP, the Urban League and other informal, formal, government and non-governmental institutes. We have ignored new groups and new coalitions. We must recognize that citizens groups split and reform and are constantly being revitalized.

I would recommend that this Commission take a hard look at its role and responsibility to the citizens of the City of Newark.

I would further recommend that the Commission become so efficient in dealing with community problems and discrimination that the Mayor of our City will call on his Commission with pride and humility, knowing that his Commission is so close to the community that it represents the pulse of the community.

And I would further recommend to all Commissioners that "If you are going to die, it is better to die on the field of action than to die on the field in inactivity"

A large, stylized handwritten signature in dark ink, likely belonging to Daniel W. Blue, Jr., is written over a horizontal line.

Daniel W. Blue, Jr., Executive Director
Newark Human Rights Commission

DWB:ea

7/27/71